

with growths of *X. parietina* as food for the larvae, and some old roofing felt to provide them with cover and a substrate to fix their cases under.

On 14 February 2003 the flower-pots were lifted and about 150 (80 and 71) live (mobile) larvae removed, placed in culture vessels and brought indoors for pupation and emergence. Success I thought. However, from these only three males and two females emerged, the males between 4 and 6 March and the females between 9 and 13 March. The remaining cases were opened on 22 March and their contents found to have died before or after pupation. This was apparently due to desiccation, despite periodic water spraying during this period. I suspect that they were brought indoors too early, as they were still perambulating and had not fixed their cases for pupation.

It appears that that this species, and I suspect *D. lichenella*, is very sensitive to humidity. Uwe has also come to the same conclusion and says that members of this genus are notoriously hard to culture. Consequently, if attempting to rear this psychid I would suggest using large flower-pots for overwintering larvae, in an attempt to provide a range of micro-climates. Also, avoid excessive moisture by ensuring the ground used for sinking the flower-pots is well drained and leave the pots *in-situ* until at least the end of February or the middle of March. Just goes to show that you shouldn't count your bagmoths before their hatched.— IAN SIMS, 2 The Delph, Lower Earley, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 3AN. (E-mail: Sims@wrcplc.co.uk)

***Pyrausta aurata* (Scop.) (Lep.: Pyralidae) in Staffordshire**

The pyralid *Pyrausta aurata* has always been a locally uncommon moth in Staffordshire, and is patchily distributed in the rest of England, Wales, southern Scotland to the Inner Hebrides and in the Channel Islands (Goater, 1986. *British Pyralid Moths*). The larvae are associated with *Mentha*, *Calamintha*, *Salvia* and *Origanum vulgare*. There are very few Staffordshire records of the moth. The earliest are from Dovedale (H. W. Daltry, given in the *Victoria County History*) and then later there are records from the Manifold Valley by the late Richard Warren who noted it (1988. *The smaller moths of Staffordshire*) as more common on the limestone than elsewhere in the county. Subsequent records are from gardens, at light traps – one at Springfields in 1977 (R. G. Warren and D. W. Emley), one at Stone in 2000 (D. W. Emley) and one at Acton Trussel in 2000 (S. Phipps). Subsequently, one landed on the head of my friend R. H. Heath in his garden at Meir, at around midnight on the warm, humid night of 14 August 2002. I quickly boxed it for examination. Mr Heath grows cultivated mint in his garden, but there is also some Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*, which originated at the River Blythe, and may be the source? This small pyralid moth is possibly rather more widespread in Staffordshire than the records suggest.

I thank Keith Bloor and Don Steward, Keepers of Natural History at the Potteries Museum, who saw the living specimen and also David Emley (Staffordshire Lepidoptera Recorder) and Craig Slawson for distribution records.— JAN KORYSZKO, 3 Dudley Place, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 7AY.